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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/802,326	03/17/2004	Bob McGuire	15912/09035	3733
27530	7590	11/08/2005	EXAMINER	
NELSON MULLINS RILEY & SCARBOROUGH, LLP 1320 MAIN STREET, 17TH FLOOR COLUMBIA, SC 29201			SMITH, MATTHEW J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3672	

DATE MAILED: 11/08/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/802,326

Applicant(s)

MCGUIRE ET AL.

Examiner

Matthew J. Smith

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-28 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 and 18-27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 13-17 and 28 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 17 March 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 17Mar04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_.

### ***Drawings***

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the "spanner nuts" (claim 5) and "wing nuts" (claim 6) must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference character(s) not mentioned in the description: Fig. 9, 101, 102, 103, 104, 104a, 105, 106, 107, 108; Fig. 15, 37'; Fig. 20, 186, 202.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d), or amendment to the specification to add the reference character(s) in the description in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(b) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-4 and 7-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Begg (1988442).

Begg discloses a hybrid wellhead system, comprising: first and second tubular heads 13, 14, each tubular head suspending a respective tubular string 19, 40 in the well, the tubular heads being connected to each other and the second head to a tubing head spool, for vent pipes 20, 43, in the hybrid wellhead system by threaded unions 35, 54; the tubing head spool having a flanged top end, above pipe 56, for connection of a flow-control stack (page 2, col. 1, line 33); the first tubular head 13 is a wellhead, and the second tubular head 14 is an intermediate head spool; the first and second threaded unions are hammer unions; the wellhead threadedly connected to a surface casing 10 and supports an intermediate casing mandrel 13, the intermediate casing mandrel suspending an intermediate casing 19 in the well; the intermediate head spool supports a production casing mandrel 14, the production casing mandrel suspending a production casing 40; the tubing head spool supports a tubing hanger 39, the tubing hanger suspending a production tubing 40; the intermediate casing mandrel having a conical bottom end received in a casing bowl 21 of the wellhead; a shoulder of the intermediate head spool locks down the intermediate casing mandrel; slips 18 for supporting the intermediate casing, the slips being received in the casing bowl of the wellhead; an annular seal plate 23 sitting atop the slips; and the seal plate has a plurality of annular grooves for receiving O-rings 45.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Begg in view of Scott (3724501).

Begg discloses a hybrid wellhead system, comprising: first and second tubular heads 13, 14, each tubular head suspending a respective tubular string 19, 40 in the well, the tubular heads being connected to each other and the second head to a tubing head spool, for vent pipes 20, 43, in the hybrid wellhead system by threaded unions 35, 54; the tubing head spool having a flanged top end, above pipe 56, for connection of a flow-control stack (page 2, col. 1, line 33); the first tubular head is a wellhead, and the second tubular head is an intermediate head spool; the first and second threaded unions are hammer unions but not threaded unions being spanner nuts.

Scott presents threaded unions being spanner nuts 80.

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a spanner nut, as presented by Scott, instead of a hammer union since it is well known to connect well parts with a spanner nut.

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Begg in view of Brisco (6220361).

Begg discloses a hybrid wellhead system, comprising: first and second tubular heads 13, 14, each tubular head suspending a respective tubular string 19, 40 in the well, the tubular heads being connected to each other and the second head to a tubing head spool, for vent pipes 20, 43, in the hybrid wellhead system by threaded unions 35, 54; the tubing head spool having a flanged top end, above pipe 56, for connection of a flow-control stack (page 2, col. 1, line 33); the first tubular head is a wellhead, and the second tubular head is an intermediate head spool; the first and second threaded unions are hammer unions but not threaded unions being wing nuts.

Brisco shows threaded unions being wing nuts 66.

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a wing nut, as shown by Brisco, instead of a hammer union since it is well known to connect well parts with a wing nut.

Claims 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Begg in view of Dallas (6626245).

Begg discloses a hybrid wellhead system, comprising: first and second tubular heads 13, 14, each tubular head suspending a respective tubular string 19, 40 in the well, the tubular heads being connected to each other and the second head to a tubing head spool, for vent

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pipes 20, 43, in the hybrid wellhead system by threaded unions 35, 54; the tubing head spool having a flanged top end, above pipe 56, for connection of a flow-control stack (page 2, col. 1, line 33) but not a tubing head spool rated for a working pressure of 10,000-15,000 PSI or rated for a working pressure of 3000-5000 PSI.

Dallas describes a tubing head spool rated for a working pressure of 10,000-15,000 PSI or rated for a working pressure of 3000-5000 PSI (col. 6, line 42).

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to fabricate the Begg spool for 3000 to 15000 psi, as described by Dallas, in order to withstand high pressure applications.

Claims 21-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Begg in view of Bigbie et al. (4541490).

Begg discloses method of installing a wellhead comprising the steps of: securing successive tubular heads to the wellhead using a threaded union 35, 54; an intermediate head spool 14 threadedly secured to a wellhead, at 15; the tubing head spool 14 threadedly secured to the intermediate head spool; securing each successive tubular head by securing each tubular head using a hammer union; landing slips 18, 39 onto a casing bowl of a wellhead; landing an annular seal plate 23 over the slips; locking down the seal plate using a packing nut 29; and a flow control stack (page 2, col. 1, line 33) but not a production valve, securing a flow-control stack to the wellhead using a flanged connection, or the flow-control stack is flanged to a top flange of a tubing head spool or wellhead.

Bigbie et al. depict a production valve (col. 4, line 23) and a flow-control stack flanged to connect a top flange of a tubing head spool (fig. 4).

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a production valve in the Begg Christmas tree and connect the spool or wellhead to the Christmas tree with a flanged connection, as depicted by Bigbie et al., in order to control pressure and secure two well parts together, respectively.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 13-17 and 28 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Matthew J. Smith whose telephone number is 571-272-7034. The examiner can normally be reached on T-F, 9-4.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David J. Bagnell can be reached on 571-272-6999. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.



Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
David Bagnell  
Supervisory Patent Examiner  
Art Unit 3672

MJS *MJS*  
19 October 2005